

move in. I would hope that the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) would commit to working with those of us who are concerned about this issue to craft language which would ensure that these organizations comply with State and local civil rights laws which exist in communities across the Nation.

The gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) and several representatives of the leadership have expressed their desire to clarify this issue in conference.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. If the gentleman will further yield, as sponsors of the bill, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) and I are willing to make the commitment that we will more clearly address this issue in conference and with the gentleman as the process moves along.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT).

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, to be honest, on days like today, I am just saddened to be a part of this body. We bring bills like this to the floor and we scream at each other; and the truth of the matter is that there are wonderful, good people on both sides of this issue.

There are people, black and white, Republicans and Democrats, and I could use all of my time, who have spent their entire lives fighting against discrimination. Some of them are supporting this bill; some of them are opposing this bill. The ones who are supporting it, I believe, are supporting it because they believe that the benefits outweigh the detriment, and those who oppose it believe that the detriment outweighs the benefit. I happen to be in that latter category.

I have spent my entire life fighting against discrimination in every form, racial, religious, gender, sexual orientation, without exception; and I will not vote for a bill that sanctions discrimination in religion. And that is what this bill does.

Now, some of us can say that it is worth the price to do that, and I will respect a colleague who says that. But I will not respect anybody who gets up and denies that the bill does not do that. Even the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) acknowledged that right now he is going to work on it in conference.

The time to work on the bill is here, now, in the committee, in the House. And if it does not measure up, we should vote it down and support the Democratic substitute.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the distinguished Speaker of the House.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the President's faith-based initiative and urge all of my colleagues to vote for it.

This is a bipartisan bill. I worked last year with President Clinton to do

the urban renewal on a bipartisan basis. This idea is not new. When the urban renewal bill was moved last year, I think it almost had unanimous consent on both sides of the aisle.

Why, and why is this important? As we walked through this situation, and I kind of led the antidrug effort, at least on this side of the aisle for a couple of years before I got another job, we found that when we walked into drug treatment organizations that were usually government-run, we had recidivism rates of 95, 96, and 97 percent. When we walked into faith-based organizations to see what their results were, we had recidivism rates as low as 24 and 25 percent. It works.

When people care about people and offer their time and their faith and their hard work and their commitment and devotion to change people's lives, it works. Not only does it have the net result of changing people's lives, allowing people to live a better life, allowing their children and their grandchildren to live a better life, it is also one of the things that, as we look around here, is a little cost effective. If we have recidivism rates of 95, 96, and 97 percent and then turn around and have an answer where recidivism rates are a third of that or less than that, then that is a good idea. It is something we ought to look at.

I believe we need to put the protections in. We need to have the safeguards, and we are trying to do that. I think the good faith of the sponsor says he will do that.

This is a good idea. It is not a new idea. It is part of President Clinton's urban renewal that we did just last year. It is something that works, something that is eminently good common sense. So let us move forward with this. Let us pass it. Let us get it into the Senate. Let us work through the process. Let us lead. Let us do what is right for America.

I commend the sponsor and those who support it, and I appreciate the gentleman from the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), who has worked on this as well. I have walked a lot of districts, both Republican and Democrat districts. I walked with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) in Chicago, and have talked to people who have been able to change people's lives. Let us give them a chance to do a better job.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK).

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, there is virtual unanimity here on the goal the Speaker stated. We simply do not believe that to get the benefit of these decent well-motivated individuals who run the faith-based institutions that we have to give them the right to discriminate.

Now, we were told, well, there is probably a concession that there are

parts of this bill that would allow too much discrimination, but they will be fixed in conference. It is funny, when I heard this was the faith-based bill, I thought they were talking about faith in God, not faith in the Senate. I think there is a lot less of that over here than of the other.

This bill clearly authorizes the preemption of State and local civil rights laws. What it says is with Federal money, doing purely secular activities, albeit motivated by faith, they can violate State and local laws. And if the money is commingled, if there is State money and local money, and they try to condition that money on their policies, the Federal money wipes that out. It also allows religious discrimination.

It seems to me to disserve the faith-based communities. It insults them to say that they can only go forward if they are allowed to violate otherwise applicable State law and discriminate on these grounds.

And let me address one absolute inaccuracy. The suggestion that we have heard, that the substitute and then the subsequent recommit, somehow will enact the National Gay Rights Bill, that is absolutely and completely and totally false. All this says is that where there are existing State, State antidiscrimination laws, and an organization would otherwise be covered by them, they are still covered. Federal money does not become the universal solvent. If an organization is in a State and they get Federal highway money, that does not exempt them from State laws. If they get Federal housing money, it does not exempt them from State laws.

Do my colleagues really think so little, those on the other side, of churches and faith-based institutions, and synagogues and mosques, as to think they will not do this faith-based charity unless they are given a special right to violate State laws and discriminate against people? I think we are the ones who truly show faith in them.

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Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL).

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have heard a lot of interesting stories today. Some of the speakers, I think, have pointed out worst-case scenarios. These scenarios have never actually come about. They have never happened. We have voted on this four times in the Congress, and these worst-case scenarios have never happened.

This is about the little guy. It is about the man or woman that is helping the least and the lost of our society. It is about the small organization with a few employees, maybe two, three or four employees. It might be one person, the same person dishing out cereal in the morning. He is also the person that is leading the Bible class in the afternoon. He probably has got a jobs program late in the afternoon. At night, he is turning off the